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(54) **METALIZED PLASTIC ARTICLES AND METHODS THEREOF**

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

Metalized plastic substrates, and methods thereof are provided herein. The method includes providing a plastic substrate having a plurality of accelerators dispersed in the plastic substrate. The accelerators have a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$. The method further includes removing at least a portion of a surface of the plastic substrate to expose at least a first accelerator. The method further includes plating the exposed surface of the plastic substrate to form at least a first metal layer on the at least first accelerator, and then plating the first metal layer to form at least a second metal layer.

17 Claims, No Drawings

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METALIZED PLASTIC ARTICLES AND METHODS THEREOF

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application claims the priority and benefit of Chinese Patent Application No. CN201010260236.0, filed with State Intellectual Property Office, P. R. C., on Aug. 19, 2010.

FIELD OF THE PRESENT DISCLOSURE

The present disclosure relates generally to plastic articles. In more particularity, the present disclosure relates to a surface metallization method for the same.

BACKGROUND OF THE PRESENT DISCLOSURE

Metalization, also spelled metallization, is the process in which a non-metal substrate, such as a plastic, is coated, deposited, or otherwise provided, with a metallic layer or plating. Without wishing to be bound by the theory, Applicant believes that the metalization process may improve the substrates' ability to transmit, or otherwise transfer, electric and/or magnetic signals.

SUMMARY OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with various illustrative embodiments hereinafter disclosed are methods of metalizing a plastic substrate. The method may include providing a plastic substrate having a plurality of accelerators dispersed in the plastic substrate. The accelerators may have a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$. The method may include removing at least a portion of a surface of the plastic substrate to expose at least a first accelerator. The method may further include plating the exposed surface of the plastic substrate to form at least a first metal layer on the at least first accelerator, and then plating the first metal layer to form at least a second metal layer.

In accordance with another illustrative embodiment hereinafter disclosed are plastic articles comprising: a plastic substrate having a plurality of accelerators plated with at least first and second metal layers, wherein the accelerators having a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$.

While the metalized plastic substrates and methods thereof will be described in connection with various preferred illustrative embodiments, it will be understood that it is not intended to limit the metalized plastics and methods thereof to those embodiments. On the contrary, it is intended to cover all alternatives, modifications, and equivalents as may be included within the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE EMBODIMENT

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment of the present disclosure, a method of metalizing a plastic substrate is provided. The method may include providing a plastic substrate having a plurality of accelerators dispersed in the plastic

substrate. The accelerators may have a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$. The method may include the step of removing at least a portion of a surface of plastic substrate to expose at least a first accelerator. In an embodiment, a determined, or predetermined, portion of a surface of the plastic substrate may be removed to expose at least a first accelerator. The method may further include plating the exposed surface of the plastic substrate to form at least a first metal layer on the at least first accelerator, and then plating the first metal layer to form at least a second metal layer.

In another illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment of the present disclosure, a plastic substrate may have a plurality of accelerators plated with at least a first and a second metal layers. The accelerators may have a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$. The structure of the first and second metal layers may be the same or different and may each be independently from each other selected from the group consisting of: Ni—Cu—Ni, or Ni—Cu—Ni—Au, or Cu—Ni, or Cu—Ni—Au.

Accelerators

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, the accelerators may have a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma \leq 1.0$.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the mean average diameter of each accelerator may range from about 3 nanometers to about 200 microns, alternatively from about 20 nanometers to about 100 microns, and alternatively from about 10 nanometers to about 50 microns. The accelerators may be from about 1 wt % to about 40 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate, alternatively from about 1 wt % to about 30 wt %, and alternatively from about 2 wt % to about 15 wt %.

In a further non-limiting embodiment, particularly suitable accelerators may include: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{3.65}$, $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{3.2}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{2.84}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{2.5}$, TiO , and $\text{TiO}_{1.9}$. Still further suitable accelerators, without limitation, may include $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{3.65}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{2.84}$, and TiO .

The accelerators may be commercially available, or prepared by any technique known to those skilled in the art. For example one non-limiting suitable method for preparing the accelerators includes: preparing metal oxides/composite metal oxides by any technique known to those skilled in the art, such as co-precipitation, sol-gel, hydrothermal process, solid state sintering, etc., or obtaining commercially available metal oxides/composite metal oxides; calcining the metal oxides/composite metal oxides at high temperature in the presence of hydrogen, and/or one or more inert gases, to form oxygen vacancies thereof to obtain the accelerator.

Methods of preparing accelerators are generally known. In one non-limiting example, a method for preparing $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ may comprise: adding a mixture of $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ and $\text{Fe}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ into a stirring potassium hydroxide solution by a peristaltic pump with a speed of 1 milliliter per minutes; heating the solution to a temperature of 80° C. and constantly stirring for 24 hours, preferably the PH value of the solution is maintained at 10 to 11 while stirring; the precipitates in the solution may be cleaned and penetrated with distilled water and acetone; the penetrated precipitates may be dried at a temperature of about 120° C. for a time of about 24 hours and then

granulated to about 300 meshes to form a first end product; the first end product may be calcined at a temperature of about 1000° C. for a time of about 4 to about 6 hours in the presence of high purity nitrogen to form $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ ($0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$).

Similarly, a method for preparing $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$ may comprise similar steps. A method for preparing $\text{TiO}_{2-\alpha}$ may comprise calcining nano-titanium dioxide in the presence of nitrogen or reduced with reduction materials (such as NH_3 , H_2 , and Mg) to remove oxygen in the titanium dioxide. The nano-titanium dioxide may be commercially available.

In a non-limiting embodiment, commercially available accelerators may be titanium black (Tilack) obtained from Akoh Kasei, Japan, or titanium black (Tilox) obtained from Bo Kwang, Korea.

According to embodiments of the present disclosure, the accelerators may not be reduced to metals or activated. The accelerators may be used directly as chemical catalysts. Without wishing to be bound by the theory, Applicant believes that plating on the accelerators may help prevent plastic degradation.

In a further illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, the accelerators may be randomly or approximately uniformly dispersed within the plastic. Without wishing to be bound by the theory, Applicant believes that approximate uniform dispersion of the accelerator in the plastic may aid in forming a strong adhesion between the metal layer and the plastic substrate. Without wishing to be bound by the theory, Applicant believes that the power, or energy, required to remove at least a portion of a surface of the plastic substrate to expose at least a first accelerator may be relatively low, and no extra/high power is needed to reduce the accelerators to pure metals. Thus, Applicant believes that in various embodiments of the present disclosure, the method may have relatively low energy or power requirements, low production costs, and be may relatively simple to perform.

In a further non-limiting embodiment, the accelerator may be a metal oxide or a metal composite oxide having oxygen vacancies. According to embodiments of the present disclosure, the metal oxide or metal composite oxide having oxygen vacancies may have strong reducibility and instability. For example and without wishing to be bound by the theory, the accelerator CuFe_2O_x ($x < 4$) may have relatively strong reducibility and instability due to at least the following: a) CuFe_2O_x ($x < 4$) has oxygen vacancies and oxygen may be efficiently combined to crystal lattice of CuFe_2O_x ($x < 4$); b) in CuFe_2O_x ($x < 4$) the electron transfer may exist not only between Cu^+ and Cu^{2+} , Fe^{2+} and Fe^{3+} , but also between Cu^+ and Fe^{3+} , thus, electron transfer may cause the lost of electrons which indicates a strong reducibility; and c) during the period of forming oxygen vacancies in CuFe_2O_4 , a large amount of cations may be combined in the crystalline lattice thereof, causing an extension of crystalline lattice gap, change of crystalline lattice, and the increasing of chemical potential energy. Therefore without wishing to be bound by the theory, CuFe_2O_x ($x < 4$) with oxygen vacancies may have a relatively instable structure and oxygen ions may be needed to fill the oxygen vacancies, which may form a strong reducibility.

According to various embodiments of the present disclosure, the metal oxide or metal composite oxide with a certain range of oxygen vacancies may be used as accelerators, and metal layers may be plated directly on the accelerators.

Plastic Substrate

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, the plastic substrate may be predominantly formed of a plastic material. In an embodiment, the plastic material may be a thermoplastic plastic, or thermoset otherwise called a thermosetting plastic. Without limitation, the thermoplastic plastic may be

selected from the group consisting of polyolefin, polyester, polyamide, polyaromatic ether, polyester-imide, polycarbonate (PC), polycarbonate/acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene composite (PC/ABS), polyphenylene oxide (PPO), polyphenylene sulfide (PPS), polyimide (PI), polysulfone (PSU), poly(ether ether ketone) (PEEK), polybenzimidazole (FBI), liquid crystalline polymer (LCP), and combinations thereof. Without limitation, the polyolefin may be polystyrene (PS), polypropylene (PP), polymethyl methacrylate (PMMA) or acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene (ABS); the polyester may be polycyclohexylene dimethylene terephthalate (PCT), poly(diallyl isophthalate) (PDAIP), poly(diallyl terephthalate) (PDAP), polybutylene naphthalate (PBN), Poly(ethylene terephthalate) (PET), or polybutylene terephthalate (PBT); the polyamide may be polyhexamethylene adipamide (PA-66), Nylon 69 (PA-69), Nylon 64 (PA-64), Nylon 612 (PA-612), polyhexamethylene sebacamide (PA-610), Nylon 1010 (PA-1010), Nylon 11 (PA-11), Nylon 12 (PA-12), Nylon 8 (PA-8), Nylon 9 (PA-9), polycaprolactam (PA-6), poly(p-phenylene terephthalamide) (PPTA), poly-meta-xylylene adipamide (MXD6), polyhexamethylene terephthalamide (PA6T), and Nylon 9T (PAST). Without limitation, the thermoset may be one or more members selected from the group consisting of phenolic resin, urea-formaldehyde resin, melamine-formaldehyde resin, epoxy resin, alkyd resin, polyurethane, and combinations thereof.

Dispersion of Accelerator(s) in Plastic Substrate

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, the accelerator(s) may be dispersed within the plastic substrate by any method of mixture or combination, followed, without limitation, by a molding process. In various embodiments, the accelerator(s) may become dispersed in the plastic substrate by using an internal mixer, a single screw extruder, a twin screw extruder or a mixer. Then, a plastic substrate may be formed with various kinds of shapes during an injection molding, blow molding, extraction molding, or hot press molding processes.

Additives

In illustrative, non-limiting, embodiments, the plastic substrate may further comprise one or more generally known, and commercially available, additives selected from the group consisting of: an antioxidant; a light stabilizer; a lubricant; and inorganic fillers.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the antioxidant may be antioxidant 1098, 1076, 1010, 168 available from CIBA Holding Inc., located in Switzerland. The antioxidant may be about 0.01 wt % to about 2 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate.

The light stabilizer may be any such commercially available product, including a hindered amine light stabilizer, such as light stabilizer 944 available from CIBA Holding Inc., located in Switzerland. The light stabilizer may be about 0.01 wt % to about 2 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the lubricant may be selected from the group consisting of: methylpolysiloxanes; EVA waxes formed from ethylene and vinyl acetate; polyethylene waxes; stearates; and combinations thereof. The lubricant may be about 0.01 wt % to about 2 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the inorganic filler may be talcum powders, calcium carbonates, glass fibers, calcium silicate fibers, tin oxides, or carbon blacks. Glass fibers may increase the depth of exposed determined area favoring copper adhesion in further copper plating step; and tin oxide or carbon black may improve removing speed of the plastic during the removing step to shorten the process period. In

further embodiments, the inorganic filler may further be selected from the group consisting of glass beads, calcium sulfates, barium sulfates, titanium dioxides, pearl powders, wollastonites, diatomites, kaolins, pulverized coals, pottery clays, micas, oil shale ashes, aluminosilicates, aluminas, carbon fibers, silicon dioxides, zinc oxides, and combinations thereof, particularly those without harmful elements (Cr, etc) to the environment and human health. The inorganic filler may be about 1 wt % to about 70 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate.

Plastic Removal

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, at least a portion of a surface of the plastic substrate may be removed to expose at least a first accelerator. In an embodiment, at least a portion of plastic in a determined/predetermined area of the surface of the plastic substrate may be removed to expose at least a first accelerator. In an embodiment, the removal of plastic may be achieved by any know method in the art. In an embodiment, the determined/predetermined area may be the entire surface of the plastic substrate. Optionally, plastic of the surface of the plastic substrate may be removed by laser irradiating, corona discharge, chemical corrosion, and grinding, to expose at least one accelerator, and alternatively a plurality of accelerators.

In an illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, the surface of the plastic substrate may be irradiated by laser or corona discharge, causing plastic evaporation and forming a diagram in plastic substrate, preferably in a determined/predetermined area. In this way, a diagram may be formed on a surface of the plastic substrate, and accelerators in the diagram area may be exposed.

The laser instrument may be an infrared laser, or an ultraviolet laser, such as a CO₂ laser marking system. In a non-limiting embodiment, the laser may have a wavelength ranging from about 157 nanometers to about 10.6 microns; a scanning speed ranging from about 500 millimeters per second to about 8000 millimeters per second; a scanning step ranging from about 3 microns to about 9 microns; a delaying time ranging from about 30 microseconds to about 100 microseconds; a frequency ranging from about 30 kilohertz to about 40 kilohertz; a power ranging from about 3 watt to about 4 watt; and a filling space ranging from about 10 microns to about 50 microns.

The corona discharge instrument may be CW1003 corona discharge instrument provided by Sanxin Electronics Co., Ltd, Nantong, China. In a non-limiting embodiment, the corona discharge instrument may have a power ranging from more than zero to about 3 kilowatts and a speed ranging from about 1 meter per minute to about 20 meters per minute.

According to various embodiments of the present disclosure, the power of the laser or corona discharge instrument may be sufficiently great to expose at least one accelerator, and alternatively a plurality of accelerators, but not so strong as to alter or damage the accelerators, or reduce the accelerators to metals.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the chemical corrosion may be performed by a corrosion bath of N,N-dimethylformamide or tetrahydrofuran for a corrosion time ranging from about 5 minutes to about 60 minutes.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the grinding may be performed by a metallurgical sandpaper to remove the surface of the plastic substrate. In a non-limiting embodiment, the removed surface, portion, or layer, of the plastic substrate may have a thickness ranging from about 10 microns to about 50 microns, alternatively from about 10 microns to about 40 microns, alternatively from about 10 microns to about 30 microns, and alternatively from about 20 microns to about 50

microns. Stated another way, removing the surface, portion, or layer, of the plastic substrate may reduce the overall thickness of the plastic substrate by a thickness ranging from about 10 microns to about 50 microns, alternatively from about 10 microns to about 40 microns, alternatively from about 10 microns to about 30 microns, and alternatively from about 20 microns to about 50 microns.

In a non-limiting embodiment, the plastic substrate may have a thickness of—in one embodiment prior to and in another embodiment after removal—about 500 microns, or more, and the depth of the exposed portion of the plastic substrate may range from about hundreds of nanometers to less than about 100 microns. The determined area may have convexes and concaves in micro-structures, and copper may be filled in these micro-structures in the subsequent copper plating and forming strong adhesion between the substrate and the copper layer. In an embodiment, the areas without accelerators may not be irradiated, and, those areas may have low deposition speed and poor adhesion. While, a few metals may deposit in these areas they may be easily removed by, for example and without limitation, ultrasonic cleaning. In this manner, the metalization may be controlled in required areas in the surface of the plastic substrate.

First Plating

In an embodiment, after the accelerators are exposed in the surface of the plastic substrate, a copper and/or nickel plating may be introduced onto at least some of the accelerators.

In a non-limiting embodiment, after plastic removal the accelerator(s) may be exposed in at least a portion of the surface of the plastic substrate or the determined areas. Thereafter, copper-plating or nickel-plating may be applied to the accelerator(s). Methods of copper-plating and nickel-plating are generally known to those of ordinary skill in the art, and may include contacting the exposed plastic substrate with a copper-plating or a nickel-plating bath (described below). Without wishing to be bound by the theory, Applicant believes that the exposed accelerators may favor the copper or nickel ions, to be reduced to copper or nickel powders, which may cover the surface of the accelerators, and form a dense copper layer or nickel layer rapidly on the accelerators.

Further Plating

In a non-limiting embodiment, following the first plating, one or more chemical, or electroplating, layers may be applied to the copper layer or nickel layer, or plate. For example, after a first nickel layer, or plating, may be formed on the surface(s) of the accelerator(s), a copper layer, or plating, may be chemical plated on the first nickel layer, or plate, and then a second nickel layer, or plate, may be chemically plated on the copper layer, or plate, to form a composite plastic article, having a layer, or plate, structure of Ni—Cu—Ni. Alternatively, an aurum layer may be flash layered, or plated, on the composite plastic article to form a plastic article having a layer, or plate, structure of Ni—Cu—Ni—Au.

In a further illustrative, non-limiting, embodiment, after a first copper layer, or plating, is formed on the surface(s) of the accelerator(s), a nickel layer, or plate, may be plated on the first copper layer, or plate, to form a layer, or plate, structure of Cu—Ni. Alternatively, an aurum layer may be flash layered, or plated, on the Cu—Ni layer, or plate, to form a layer, or plate, structure of Cu—Ni—Au.

In various non-limiting embodiments, the nickel layer, or plate, may have a thickness ranging from about 0.1 microns to about 50 microns, alternatively from about 1 micron to about 10 microns, and alternatively from about 2 microns to about 3 microns. The copper layer, or plate, may have a thickness ranging from about 0.1 microns to about 100 microns, alternatively from about 1 microns to about 50 microns, and

alternatively from about 5 microns to about 30 microns. The aurum layer may have a thickness ranging from about 0.01 microns to about 10 microns, alternatively from about 0.01 microns to about 2 microns, and alternatively from about 0.1 microns to about 1 microns.

Chemical plating baths, electric solutions, and flash plating baths are generally known to those of ordinary skill in the art. In a non-limiting embodiment, the chemical plating bath for copper plating may comprise a copper salt and a reducer, with a pH value ranging from about 12 to about 13, wherein the reducer may reduce the copper ion to copper. The reducer may be selected from the group consisting of glyoxylic acids, hydrazines, sodium hypophosphites, and combinations thereof. In another embodiment, the chemical plating bath for copper plating may comprise 0.12 moles per liter ("mol/L") $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.14 mol/L $\text{Na}_2\text{EDTA} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 10 mol/L potassium ferrocyanide, 10 milligrams per liter ("mg/L") potassium ferrocyanide, 10 mg/L 2,2' bipyridine, and about 0.10 mol/L of glyoxylic acid (HCOCOOH), the bath having a pH ranging from about 12.5 to about 13 adjusted by NaOH and H_2SO_4 solutions. In a non-limiting embodiment, the copper plating time may range from about 10 minutes to about 240 minutes. The chemical plating bath for nickel plating may comprise about 23 grams per liter ("g/L") nickel sulfate, about 18 g/L inferior sodium phosphate, about 20 g/L lactic acid, about 15 g/L malic acid, the bath having a pH of about 5.2 adjusted by a NaOH solution, and a temperature of about 85°C . to about 90°C . In a non-limiting embodiment, the nickel plating time may range from about 8 minutes to about 15 minutes.

Aurum flash plating is generally known to those of ordinary skill in the art. In a non-limiting embodiment, the flash plating bath may be a BG-24 neutral aurum bath, which is commercially available from Shenzhen Jingyanchuang Chemical Company, located in Shenzhen, China.

The following examples provide additional details of some embodiments of the present disclosure:

EXAMPLE 1

In the first example:

- a) A mixture of $\text{Cu}(\text{NO}_3)_2$ (0.5 mol/L) and $\text{Fe}(\text{NO}_3)_3$ (0.5 mol/L) was added into a stirred potassium hydroxide solution by a peristaltic pump with a speed of 1 milliliter per minute. The mixed solution was heated to a temperature of 80°C . and stirring was maintained for 24 hours, the PH value of the solution kept at 10 to 11 while stirring. The precipitates in the solution were cleaned with distilled water and acetone, and then penetrated. Finally, the penetrated precipitates were dried at a temperature of 120°C . for 24 hours and granulated to 300 meshes to form a first end product;
- b) The first end product was calcined at temperature of 1000°C . for a time of 4 hours in the presence of high purity nitrogen, then granulated for a time of 10 hours to form $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ ($0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$) with an average diameter of 700 nanometers. The $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ was chemically analyzed by the following steps: the mole quantity of Cu and Fe in $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ was tested by atomic absorption spectrometry (AAS); the $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ was dissolved in HCl solution, in this step Cu^+ was oxidized to Cu^{2+} ; the mole quantity of Fe^{2+} was determined by ultraviolet spectrophotometry (UVS); according to the above mentioned steps, the mole quantities of Cu^{2+} , Fe^{2+} , Fe^{3+} were all known, then the oxygen vacancy was calculated and it was determined that $\delta=0.35$. AAS was performed with an atomic absorption spectrophotometer, C10140, commercially available from PerkinElmer Inc., located in

the US. UVS was performed with an UV spectrophotometer, UVmini-1240, commercially available from HVK Co., Ltd, located in Korea;

- c) PC/ABS resin alloy, $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$ ($\delta=0.35$) powders, calcium silicate fiber, and antioxidant 1010 were mixed in a weight ratio of 100:10:30:0.2 in a high speed mixer to prepare a mixture; the mixture was then granulated in a twin screw extruder (provided from Nanjing Rubber & Plastics Machinery Plant Co., Ltd.) and then injection molded to form a plastic substrate for a circuit board of a LED lighting;
- d) A metal circuit diagram was curved in a determined area of a surface of the plastic substrate with a DPF-M12 infrared laser, available from TIDE PHARMACEUTICAL CO., LTD, located in Beijing, China. The laser had a wavelength of 1064 nanometers, a scanning speed of 4000 millimeters per second, a step of 9 microns, a delaying time of 30 microseconds, a frequency of about 40 kilohertz, a power of 3 watt, and a filling space of 50 microns; the surface of the plastic article was then ultrasonically cleaned;
- e) The plastic substrate was immersed in a nickel plating bath for 10 minutes to form a nickel layer having a thickness of 4 microns on the accelerators; the plastic substrate was immersed in a copper plating bath for 4 hours to form a copper layer having a thickness of 15 microns on the nickel layer; thereafter, the plastic substrate was immersed in a nickel plating bath for 10 minutes to form a nickel layer having a thickness of 5 microns on the copper layer; then the plastic substrate was flash plated with an aurum layer having a thickness of 0.03 microns on the nickel layer; where the copper plating bath comprised 0.12 mol/L $\text{CuSO}_4 \cdot 5\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 0.14 mol/L $\text{Na}_2\text{EDTA} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$, 10 mg/L potassium ferrocyanide, 10 mg/L 2,2' bipyridine, 0.10 mol/L glyoxylic acid, having a pH of from 12.5 to 13, which was adjusted by NaOH and H_2SO_4 solutions; the nickel plating bath comprised 23 g/L nickel sulfate, 18 g/L inferior sodium phosphate, 20 g/L lactic acid, 15 g/L malic acid, the bath had a PH value of about 5.2; the flash plating bath was BG-24 neutral aurum bath, which was obtained from SHENZHEN JINGYANCHUANG CHEMICAL COMPANY, located in Shenzhen, China; the plastic substrate was formed into a plastic article for a circuit board.

EXAMPLE 2

In the second example:

- a) A mixture of CaCO_3 , CuO , and TiO_2 powders were evenly mixed according to a stoichiometric ratio of $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_3$, and then milled in a ball mill for a milling time of 8 hours, with absolute alcohol as the milling mediate. The milled mixture was pre-calcined at a temperature of 800°C . for a time of 10 hours to form $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_3$ powders.
- b) The $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_3$ powders were calcined at temperature of 900°C . for a time of 4 hours in the presence of argon, then granulated to form $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$ with an average diameter of 500 nanometers. The $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$ was chemically analyzed, according to the same method described in the first example, and it was determined that $\beta=0.16$.
- c) PP resin, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$ ($\beta=0.16$) powders, antioxidant 1010, and polyethylene wax were mixed in a weight ratio of 100:10:0.2:0.1 to prepare a mixture; the mixture was granulated then injection molded to form an plastic substrate for a shell of an electric connector;
- d) A metal circuit diagram was curved in a determined area of a surface of the plastic substrate with a CW1003

corona discharge instrument commercially available from Sanxin Electronics Co., Ltd, located in Nantong, China. The instrument had a speed of 1 meter per minute and a power of 2 kilowatt.

- e) The plating step was in the same manner as in step (e) of EXAMPLE 1, with the following exceptions: the plastic substrate was immersed in a nickel plating bath for 8 minutes to form a nickel layer having a thickness of 2 microns on the accelerators; the plastic substrate was immersed in a copper plating bath for 4 hours to form a copper layer having a thickness of 15 microns on the nickel layer; thereafter, the plastic substrate was immersed in a nickel plating bath for 10 minutes to form a nickel layer having a thickness of 3 microns on the copper layer; and then the plastic substrate was flash plated with an aurum layer having a thickness of 0.03 microns on the nickel layer.

EXAMPLE 3

In the third example, the plastic article was prepared in the same manner as in EXAMPLE 1, with the following exceptions:

In step c) titanium black (average diameter of 50 nanometers, $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, $\sigma=1$, Tilack, commercially from Akoh Kasei Company, located in Japan), PP resin, calcium silicate fiber, and antioxidant 1010 were mixed in a weight ratio of 100:10:30:0.2 in a high speed mixer to prepare a mixture; the mixture was then granulated in a twin screw extruder (provided from Nanjing Rubber & Plastics Machinery Plant Co., Ltd.) and then injection molded to form an plastic substrate for a circuit board of an LED lighting;

In step d) the metal circuit diagram was curved in a determined area of a surface of the plastic substrate by chemical corrosion, with a corrosion material of N,N-dimethylformamide and a corrosion time of 30 minutes.

EXAMPLE 4

In the fourth example, the plastic article was prepared in the same manner as in EXAMPLE 2, with the following exceptions:

In step c) the mixture was granulated then injection molded to form an plastic substrate for a component of bath equipments; and

In step d) all the surface of the plastic substrate was polished by a metallurgical sandpaper, and the exposed portion of the plastic substrate had a depth of 20 microns.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of metalizing a plastic substrate comprising: providing a plastic substrate having a plurality of accelerators uniformly dispersed in the plastic substrate, the accelerators having a formula selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{4-\delta}$, $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{3-\beta}$, and $\text{TiO}_{2-\sigma}$, wherein δ , β , σ denotes oxygen vacancies in corresponding accelerators and $0.05 \leq \delta \leq 0.8$, $0.05 \leq \beta \leq 0.5$, and $0.05 \leq \sigma < 1.0$;

removing at least a portion of a surface of the plastic substrate to expose at least a first accelerator, wherein the power used to remove the portion of the surface of the plastic substrate is less than the power to reduce the accelerators to pure metals;

plating the exposed surface of the plastic substrate to form at least a first metal layer on the at least first accelerator; and

plating the first metal layer to form at least a second metal layer.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the plastic is selected from group consisting of a thermoplastic and a thermoset; the accelerator is approximately evenly distributed throughout the plastic substrate; the first metal layer comprises copper-plating or nickel plating; and the second metal layer is electroplated or chemical plated, and the removed portion of the surface of the plastic substrate is a determined area.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the plastic substrate is provided by a molding process selected from a group consisting of injection molding, blow molding, extraction molding, and hot press molding.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein the determined area is on the surface of the plastic substrate and plastic in the determined area is removed by a process selected from a group consisting of laser irradiating, corona discharge, chemical corrosion, and grinding.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the determined area is a part of the surface of the plastic substrate and plastic in the determined area is removed by laser irradiating or corona discharge.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein the determined area is removed by laser irradiating and the laser irradiation has a wave length ranging from about 157 nanometers to about 10.6 microns, a scanning speed ranging from about 500 millimeters per second to about 8000 millimeters per second.

7. The method of claim 5, wherein the determined area is removed by laser irradiating and the laser irradiation has a wave length ranging from about 157 nanometers to about 10.6 microns.

8. The method of claim 4, wherein the determined area is removed by corona discharge and the corona discharge has a power between more than zero and about 3 kilowatt.

9. The method of claim 5, wherein the determined area is removed by corona discharge and the corona discharge has a power between more than zero and about 3 kilowatt and a speed ranging from about 1 meter per minute to about 20 meters per minute.

10. The method of claim 4, wherein the chemical corrosion is performed by a corrosion bath of N,N-dimethylformamide or tetrahydrofuran for a corrosion time ranging from about 5 minutes to about 60 minutes; and the grinding is performed by a metallurgical sandpaper and removed surface of the plastic substrate has a thickness ranging from about 10 microns to about 50 microns.

11. The method of claim 2, wherein the metal layers have a structure selected from the group consisting of Ni—Cu—Ni; Ni—Cu—Ni—Au; Cu—Ni; and Cu—Ni—Au.

12. The method of claim 11, wherein the nickel layers each have a thickness ranging from about 0.1 microns to about 50 microns; the copper layers each have a thickness ranging from about 0.1 microns to about 100 microns; and the aurum layers each have a thickness ranging from about 0.01 microns to about 10 microns.

13. The method of claim 1, wherein the accelerators each have an average diameter ranging from about 20 nanometers to about 100 microns.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein the accelerator is about 1 wt % to about 40 wt % of the plastic substrate, based on the total weight of the plastic substrate.

15. The method of claim 1, wherein the accelerator is selected from the group consisting of: $\text{CuFe}_2\text{O}_{3.65}$, and $\text{Ca}_{0.25}\text{Cu}_{0.75}\text{TiO}_{2.84}$.

16. The method of claim 2, wherein: the thermoplastic plastic is selected from the group consisting of polyolefin, polycarbonate (PC), polyester, polyamide, polyaromatic ether, polyester-imide, polycarbonate/acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene composite (PC/ABS), polyphenylene oxide

(PPO), polyphenylene sulfide (PPS), polyimide (PI), polysulfone (PSU), poly (ether ether ketone) (PEEK), polybenzimidazole (PBI), liquid crystalline polymer (LCP), and combinations thereof; and the thermoset is selected from the group consisting of: phenolic resin, urea-formaldehyde resin, 5 melamine-formaldehyde resin, epoxy resin, alkyd resin, polyurethane, and combinations thereof.

17. The method of claim 1, wherein the plastic substrate further comprises at least one additive selected from the group consisting of: an antioxidant, a light stabilizer, a lubricant, and inorganic fillers. 10

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UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

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APPLICATION NO. : 13/186280
DATED : September 30, 2014
INVENTOR(S) : Qing Gong et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

In the Claims

Claim 1, col. 9, line 56, "0.05 \leq δ 0.8," should read -- 0.05 \leq δ \leq 0.8, --.

Signed and Sealed this
Third Day of February, 2015



Michelle K. Lee
Deputy Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office